



Lion Yard redevelopment site looking to Petty Cury, 1972 154.52

Cambridge LION YARD Chronicle, by Mike Petty

c.49.67: Lion Yard Redevelopment

1950

1950 12 09

“The almost hopeless state of parking in Cambridge” was referred to when Ald F.J. Priest urged the demolition without delay of Liddiard’s garage on St Andrew’s Hill – thus providing parking spaces for some of the season-ticket holders at Lion Yard. The building had been scheduled as an ‘architectural novelty’ but there would be no objection to its immediate demolition.

1951 03 14

Cambridge Council is to recommend a scheme for a multi-deck car park at the Lion Yard. The Surveyor suggests all adjoining property owned by the council should be demolished, the opportunity being taken to widen Corn Exchange Street and St Tibb’s Row and that the possibility of further extensions to St Andrews Hill for offices, shops or increased car park facilities should be borne in mind. He submitted a plan showing a building of six floors which could accommodate 825 cars 51 03 14 [1.12]

1954 03 15

Properties in Corn Exchange Street may be demolished to increase parking space in the Lion Yard. It could then accommodate another 60 cars. This would bring in an increased revenue of about £1,360 per annum, but be offset by a £1,286 loss on rental from the demolished premises. Councillors were considering the early provision of a multi-deck park but until the Minister had made a decision on the development plan it would be impossible even to proceed with sketch plans. Sites have also been cleared in the Park Street area, but in view of the extremely poor access they decided to take no action to form a car park in that area.

1956 10 16

Councillors say that multi-storey car parks should be provided at Lion Yard, Saxon Street, Park Street and New Square and 170 cars should be parked on the site of the existing police flats at Parkside. But traffic congestion in Cambridge has become so acute that 'No Waiting' restrictions should be imposed in the central area and King Street made one-way. 56 10 16a

1956 11 01

If the City Council feel unable to implement the development of the Lion Yard area, then the Government should nominate the County Council as the acquiring and development authority, councillors recommend. They have met University officials who have ask that a substantial area of floor space, including some at ground level, should be made available for their purposes. 56 11 01a

1957 05 17

Proposals have been announced for an underground car park at Parker's Piece capable of accommodating about 5,000 vehicles. When complete it would be unaltered on the surface but beneath would be many acres of car parking space with four sloping entrances. It will take two years to build and be cheaper the present scheme for a multi-deck park on Lion Yard a councillor claims. 57 05 17a

1957 10 18

In 20 years' time Lion Yard car park will be outdated as the centre of the City will eventually have to be roped off from traffic, Canon Mervyn Stockwood told the council. He had frequently been up to the top of Great St Mary's and seen the appalling havoc of the central area in recent years. Now they proposed to put up a 'cheap and efficient sort of skyscraper'. He continued: "We are custodians of one of the most famous cities in the world. That sort of building cannot add to the dignity and loveliness of Cambridge" 57 10 18c

1958 12 22

New schemes for the rebuilding of the Lion Yard car park and the surrounding area are being examined by town planning experts. It may be comprehensively re-developed to include a multi-storey car park and additional shopping facilities served by a new road passing through the middle of the area. But some say that instead of a broad shopping street, which might attract more traffic into the already overcrowded centre, it should be a 'pedestrian shopping precinct' with cars being parked a short distance away 58 12 22 [2.4]

1959 01 13

Seven schemes are being considered for the Lion Yard area. It is felt essential for the financial success of the proposals that the redevelopment should embrace the existing property on the south side of Petty Cury from the Post Office to the Lion Hotel. It should extend over the existing car park to Downing Street and be linked with Emmanuel Street. The University are interested in obtaining access to the New Museums buildings on the west side of Corn Exchange Street, but this may not be practical. 59 01 13a & b

1959 01 16

The new plan for the centre of Cambridge will have as its central feature a 'pedestrian shopping precinct' from which all vehicles will be excluded. An earlier scheme which foresaw a new and widened Guildhall Street running through the Lion Yard, with new shops and a multi-deck car park, has now been dropped after being criticised as likely to attract too much extra traffic. The proposal incorporates a car park which might be placed underground. But it is certain that Corn Exchange Street would become an important vehicular road. 59 01 16

1959 04 29

The City Council is to consider the largest project ever undertaken in Cambridge. The giant Lion Yard scheme includes a two-decker underground car park taking 731 vehicles, a unique 'pedestrian shopping precinct', a new central library, residential hotel and a petrol filling station. Jesus College have also submitted a scheme for the redevelopment of the north side of Fitzroy Street. Many think

that increases in shopping facilities ought to take place as an extension of this well-established area.
59 04 29a-d & 59 04 29e

1959 05 01

The giant scheme which is to transform the centre of Cambridge received the approval of the City Council. Not one hand was raised against it when the question of developing the Lion Yard—described as ‘that revolting area’ - was put to the vote. It would make it possible for townspeople to do their shopping away from the traffic on broad footpaths and provide a much-needed car park for more than 700 cars, removing the ‘long-term parker’ from town streets and leaving the kerbs free for motorists who wish to park for ten minutes. 59 05 01a, b, c & d

1959 05 21

“The Lion Yard scheme is the biggest re-development scheme yet in England, if we omit the blitzed cities”. Ald W.G. James told the Women’s Lunch Club. “In some respects it is more difficult, for the bombing often obliterated whole areas and redevelopment could start on virgin sites. Here, boundaries, established buildings and all manner of things have to be considered”. Everyone agreed the area required comprehensive development but there was a divergence of opinion on how this should be done. A compromise was sought by 30 people on the County Planning Committee but as there were 30 different opinions, nothing was done. 59 05 21b

1959 06 12

Lion Yard opposition – 59 06 12a

1959 06 20

When the elaborate scheme for the redevelopment of the Lion Yard area was approved one could be forgiven for being rather carried away by the sheer magnitude of the whole thing. What was to have been just a car park had rather surprisingly blossomed into a complete new city centre and we were impressed by the dazzling piece of town planning so adroitly placed before us. Since then we have had time to mull over the full implications. Cambridge still retains something of its own individuality and it would be tragic to turn it into just another New Town. The scheme is a town planners’ dream. It must not become a ratepayers’ nightmare 59 06 20 & a

1959 06 26

Lion Yard – University objections – 59 06 26a

1959 07 04

A Cambridge man living in Los Angeles cautions against the new Lion Yard proposals. “Who is going to occupy the new offices and shops? If Cambridge thinks they can concentrate business in town and solve the car parking problem with a few hundred spaces they are indulging in the fondest of illusions. Parking meters in the streets don’t help: they only add to the irritation of shoppers, free parking has become the essential stock-in-trade. In America down-town shopping areas are dying and shopping centres miles out of town are the new thing.” 59 07 04

1959 07 18

Lion Yard scheme – questions and answers – 59 07 18b

1959 07 24

Lion Yard costs have risen colossally and some councillors hoped the Minister would turn the scheme down so they could start again. They could build a car park on the site more cheaply but they were bound to the developers, Edgers, and they would be a laughing stock if they went back on their word. It was the public who determined where the city centre should be and that was where banks, theatres and cinemas had moved. When a slump came it was those on the outskirts that closed down. The scheme must go forward. In the long run it would prove economical. 59 07 24a

1959 07 24

Councillors withdrew their attention from the Lion Yard area to a part of the city which some have always considered of equal importance – Fitzroy Street. This should be comprehensively redeveloped to provide residential, shopping and business facilities with a new bus station. The Lion Yard should be developed with a library, civic restaurant and small car park, leaving the frontages as they are, some argued. 59 07 24b & c

1959 08 10

Lion Yard development public inquiry: over 1,000 sign petition against scheme – 59 08 10a

1959 09 12

The present shambles known as the Lion Yard has for too long been a bone of contention. The council meetings have been stormy and wrangling has not been confined to the city. Eventually some form of compromise will be reached and some kind of order imposed on this part of the Cambridge. But before its future is finally decided archaeologists hope they will have the opportunity to investigate its past. 59 09 12

1959 11 11

The proposed Lion Yard scheme provided for a pedestrians-only shopping precinct linked to Petty Cury, office space (to be offered to the University if needed), a new Emmanuel Road, the widening of Corn Exchange Street and an underground car park including space for 750 cars of which 230 would be for office staff. There would also be a new telephone exchange, an Inquiry was told. The scheme would be completed by 1965. 59 11 11c & d & e

1959 11 19

The University thinks the Lion Yard scheme was bad planning. They are not opposed to a pedestrian precinct nor to some commercial development but preferred a mixture of University use with a concert hall seating 1,500 and some shops and offices to fill in. This would attract far less traffic at peak times. Others thought the Corn Exchange might make a site for a car park with an elevator to take cars to the upper floors. Shops could give ‘Free parking vouchers’ for customers who spent more than £5. This would attract shoppers into the car parks and make them economical. 59 11 19 a & c

1959 12 03

The Inquiry into the Lion Yard scheme was told that the Petty Cury frontage should be excluded from redevelopment: the present useful buildings would be preserved and the character of the street maintained. But Planners said they could not be adequately served as they lacked any rear access. Runciman’s veterinary premises in Downing Street had been used for 150 years and were specially designed for the purpose. They have dealt with animals as small as a mouse and as large as an elephant. The proposed replacement buildings were incompatible with the character of Cambridge 59 12 03 & a & 04 & 04a

1959 12 03

Lion Yard demolition photo – 59 12 03e

1959 12 04

Several tradesmen gave evidence at the Lion Yard inquiry. Both Miller’s and Lyon and Cade’s were old established solicitors business, their premises would be entirely swept away. G.D. Pryor owned the land let to Mac Fisheries. The former Mr Pryor was one of the last coach drivers and a fishmonger who established his business in the first half of the nineteenth century. The coach was left at the Red Lion when business had been transacted next door. The Chinese Restaurant had been greatly improved since Mr Lui took possession and was now the centre for people who enjoyed this type of food. It is difficult to imagine where it could be resited, the pedestrian precinct did not promise to be lively at night 59 12 04 abc

1959 12 05

The official inquiry into the Lion Yard Re-development Proposals – that erstwhile car park scheme blown up to make a planners' holiday – covered 15 days and produced over half-a-million words. The sponsors of the scheme and the many objectors have placed their cases fully and fairly – and sometimes forcibly. One of the main criticisms is that no evidence of the financial side was submitted. Very few members of the public attended but there was a 'full gallery' on the final day. It will be six months before the Minister's decision is made known. 59 12 05

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 01 16

So Cambridge must be destroyed. Country folk from the surrounding pastures have decreed that, just because she develops a bald patch on her Lion Yard. But even when Petty Cury has been rebuilt with modern materials the day must come when all the new buildings fall down. But by 2020 there will be no cars, and therefore no parking problems; only the original debt. No one can possibly question the integrity of the City Fathers: by their very selection they are men apart

1960 01 21

City councillors decided to drop proposals to use Butts Green as a car park for two years - even with the Lion Yard car park finished and new car parks in King Street and Park Street, there would still not be enough parking and it would never be reinstated. The income would never meet expenditure. Eventually Cambridge would have a city centre park charging about one shilling an hour. If Butt Green was to be charged at sixpence nobody would use Lion Yard and the council would be sabotaging their own scheme. 60 01 21

1960 08 30

The Minister has rejected proposals to redevelop the Lion Yard area by the building of a giant car park, shops, offices and hotel. He called the scheme 'basically unsound' as it envisaged shop and office expansion instead of decongestion in the central area and crowded too much development on to the site. He also thought that commercial expansion was neither necessary or desirable. The scheme was formulated by city and county council architects after years of study and research. It included a 750 place car park with petrol filling station and an unusual shopping precinct where all vehicular traffic was barred. 60 08 30

1961 01 02

A questionnaire shows that most people think the Lion Yard area should include a concert hall, civic restaurant, hotel and assize court together with a library. This should feature a record section, an art lending department, reading room and small exhibition area. There should be a municipal crèche where children could be left while their parents shopped and a car park reserved for those who worked in the Guildhall. Half of the respondents were in favour of traffic wardens and parking meters, though some said they had no experience of them, while 81 per cent wanted a pedestrian precinct. Other suggestions included a news cinema where people could wait in comfort for evening buses and supermarkets near the edge of the city 61 01 02a

1961 01 11

Cambridge University published proposals to enhance the city's character as a university town. Historic buildings would be retained and where redevelopment is essential the new buildings would be on a scale and character compatible with the central area. The Lion Yard development could include a civic hall which is needed both by city and university together with a library and small art gallery. If the City Council cannot pay for it then the University and some of the colleges should join in a developing consortium to provide the necessary finance to carry out the development and benefit from the profits. 60 01 11b

1961 02 11

The delay in Lion Yard redevelopment has meant that the Civic Restaurant on the corner of Petty Cury has been given a new lease of life. The dining hall has been brightened up and the provision of

window curtains will give a finishing touch. A cosmopolitan note has been struck in an announcement over the scullery in English, French, German and Italian exhorting customers to return their plates 61 02 11

1961 06 13

Sir – some of the tower blocks proposed by the University for the New Museum site would be twice the height of King's College chapel. They are opposed to the very character of the historic centre. If approved it would be impossible to object to other towers such as those of the Lion Yard that have been criticised by the Preservation Society. Would it not be better for the gradual transfer of science buildings to the west of Cambridge where a development architecturally worthy of the University could take place? – V.I. Glaster 61 06 13

1961 07 28

The Clore-Cotton deal over the Lion Hotel – the key to the city's central redevelopment – is probably the largest single property transaction made in Cambridge. But Mr Barr, secretary of the family company owning the Lion, says he had declined a much larger offer as he thought it was not in the best interests of the town. "It is a pity there has not been more co-operation of the people interested in the development. A few years ago they could have got the hotel for half the price I got today", he said. Now there was a golden opportunity for everyone to get together and sink their differences. 61 07 28 [13.2]

1962 01 04

A Council debate to decide whether to create a post of City Architect ended in chaos after the Mayor stopped discussion. A qualified architect is vital if development is to be continued with taste. Council estates were dull in lay-out and their roads were not up to modern traffic. Uninspired planning must be stopped now. At a time when the Lion Yard, Museum site and City Road area are in the melting pot they should have the advice of an architect, some councillors felt. 62 01 04a

1962 05 07

Mr Jack Cotton and Mr Charles Clore, the property millionaires, have bought the site of Heffer's from Emmanuel College on the understanding that the bookshop will be rehoused in any new redevelopment of Petty Cury. Their company, City Centre Properties, acquired the adjoining Lion Hotel site last year. The Director of Dolamore, the wine merchants, who hold the freehold of most of the corner with Guildhall Street, would not say whether they had also approached them. Recently this part of Petty Cury was included in the area scheduled for redevelopment. The firm also have an interest in the New Theatre site which is now being demolished to be replaced by a block of offices 62 05 07 [13.3]

1962 05 10

The clean-cut façade of the offices of Messrs Ellison & Co. show up well at the end of the little court in the passageway between the Lion Hotel and Heffer's bookshop in Petty Cury. The offices were acquired by the Clore-Cotton Group's City Centre Properties when they bought the premises occupied by Heffer's and the freehold of that part of the Lion Hotel formerly held on lease from Emmanuel College. The area is scheduled for redevelopment as part of the Lion Yard scheme. 62 05 10a

1962 05 31

The University's proposals for the future development of Cambridge are designed to enhance its character as a university town. The Lion Yard area should include a multi-purpose public hall, for which they have offered to pay half, a new public library, exhibition gallery and arts centre. There would be a regional shopping centre in the City Road area including department and chain stores with large scale car parking and the segregation of pedestrians from traffic. 62 05 31a

1962 06 25

University plans for the future of Cambridge envisage that in the Lion Yard there would be a new hall for conferences, concerts and all kinds of music with a new library, small shops, cafes and homes for

300 people. A new regional shopping centre in City Road would be free of all vehicular traffic and there could be more homes on the site than before. The housing areas which are close to the centre are also the oldest and many are in need of redevelopment. Already 4,000 people have had to leave since 1950 but the University wants to see at least as many living in these areas as were there ten years go.
62 06 25

1962 06 27

Public inquiry into future development of Cambridge. Highlights three divisions of opinion on lion Yard. University want commercial development restricted to new regional shopping centre Kite area with Lion Yard to have amenities like library, art gallery, concert hall etc. County accept library but reject concert hall. City want commercial development in new pedestrian shopping centre [2.11, 2.12]

1963 03 22

Underground road to service Lion Yard shops – 63 03 22a [See Memories 14 Mar 2013]

1964 04 01

Lion Yard car park as traffic meters come into operation – 64 04 01

1964 06 03

Whether or now new shopping development takes place in Lion Yard or at City Road the old shopping area should stay where it is and retain its highly individual character. Cambridge has continued to attract more and more visitors leading to fears of King's College ashtrays and "Kiss me quick" mortar boards. But one development benefiting both local and visitor must be the creation of a pedestrian precinct such as the one at Harlow. It would enable streets to be given over to their rightful functions as places for strolling, shopping and gossip 64 06 03a

1964 06 30

A car park was needed on the West side of the river to help clear Queen's Road and they should consider an underground car park at the Backs, councillors heard. Park Street was a mistake because it was too near the city centre but Coe Fen was one of the best places for a surface car park. Queen Anne Terrace was a marvellous site as it could have a basement, three of four storeys of flats and a roof garden restaurant. There would be a mini-bus to get shoppers into the centre which meant the Lion Yard would be used more by people who came to park for the day. 64 06 30

1964 07 06

Cambridge expansion: Conservatives would like to encourage businesses which start in the town and want the Market Square to be the main centre. Socialists want new light industries with the Lion Yard as a civic centre and with new shopping in Burleigh Street while the Liberals favour a central pedestrian precinct with public transport in the form of a minibus service or travloator. 64 07 06a

1964 08 28

The Lion Yard area is badly laid out and contains 'obsolete development'; there should be a small increase in shopping space with the rest devoted to civic and university uses, Sir Keith Joseph, the Minister of Housing says. A brand new shopping area should be created in the City Road area – the present twilight zone. It will take traffic away from the centre, cater for modern supermarket trends and fit in with plans for the continuation of the East Road housing scheme 64 08 28, 28b [4.15]

1964 10 23

Proposals to develop the Gonville Hotel site for a five-storey office block had been turned down on the grounds that it would encourage the introduction of new firms into Cambridge, undermining the basic principle of the restriction of employment and the stabilisation of population. Since then the council had changed its policy but had not told Sindall's the applicant. There was an urgent need for offices for professional firms displaced as a result of the Lion Yard development, an inquiry was told. 64 10 23a

1964 11 19

University offer money to engage planning team to submit plans for Lion Yard and new shopping area in City Road as urgent action needed – 64 11 19, 19d

1965 01 05

Lion Yard plan may include large hotel – 65 01 05c

1965 04 01

Fisher House not to be demolished as part of Lion Yard redevelopment – 65 04 01

1965 06 24

Lion Yard plans unveiled by Gordon Logie Gordon Logie plans civic hall with seating for 1,800 as main feature Lion Yard – 65 06 24, 65 06 25b

1965 06 29

Jesus College announce send major redevelopment scheme within week of Lion Yard plans, this one for King Street – 65 06 29, 29a

1966 03 30

Crumbling Cambridge – lack of vitality in development such as new library and Lion Yard – 66 03 30a

1966 07 15

Old Post Office, Petty Cury, Ministry of Pensions manned by a single clerk in room that precious housed counter activities; small corner occupied by National Savings Movement. Wide corridors lead to Overseas Students Club used by 10-12 students. Petty Cury shops well-maintained but accommodation above ground floor level has been condemned for years. Must all be demolished – letter – 66 07 15

1966 10 07

Burleigh/Fitzroy Street favoured for shopping redevelopment in preference to Lion Yard – 66 10 07

1966 12 009

Plan to create regional shopping centre in Fitzroy Street and develop Lion Yard primarily as civic centre approved by City Council – 66 12 09a

1967 07 05

Lion Yard redevelopment plans approved by Minister – 67 07 05a

1967 11 24

Arts facilities have been neglected, is no good concert hall, might be centre of a new Lion Yard development - 67 11 24, a

1968

Government stop city borrowing for first stage Lion Yard [5.12]

1968 02 14

“Derelict site for 120 years” [13.6]

1968 05 02

City council buys block property in St Andrew’s Street to make shopping arcade through to Lion Yard – 68 05 02

1968 10 11

Civic Restaurant closure would be a calamity but site needed for Lion Yard – 68 10 11

1968 11 12

Lion Yard plans – outline planning agreed, details – 68 11 12, 12a

1968 11 25

Trinity College start new accommodation block on site of Matthews in Sidney Street releasing land in Petty Cury for Lion Yard – 68 11 25

1969 02 05

Lion Yard plan decision delayed by Minister – 69 02 05

1970

1970 03 04

Lion Yard library might be built by Development Company instead of the city council. Ravenseft Properties may agree to build the three-storey library because it is scheduled to go on top of a block of shops; the city would then lease the building from the company – 70 03 04

1970 07 23

Lion Yard development – only legal snags remain – 70 07 23

1970 12 07

Lion Yard plan goes ahead on schedule – 70 12 07

1970 12 28

Lion Yard work finally starts – 70 12 28

1971 01 23

Archaeologists have ten days to investigate King's Ditch under Lion Yard – 71 01 23

1971 06 23

Lion Yard first level complete – view over site – 71 06 23

1971 12 24

Lion Yard plans approved by Government – 71 12 24

1972 01 14

Corn exchange St closed for work Lion Yard [13.8]

1972 03 22

New Lion Yard car park takes shape, pic, p10

1972 05 31

A free parking bonus will be given to motorists using Cambridge's show-piece Lion Yard car park during its first weeks operation after the opening date on July 24. The city's Traffic and Parking Committee decided to cut parking charges by 5p during the working day for the first week, which means one hour's free parking during each parking period. If a motorist leaves his car at Lion Yard for one hour or less it will be completely free, p15

1972 06 27

Although the war ended 27 years ago the little patch of Cambridge around Alexandra Street has a distinct 1940s look. In common with all the little alleyways off Petty Cury, Alexandra Street is in the throes of the Lion Yard re-development scheme. The old is being swept away by the demolition gangs to make way for the new and soon the whole face of the area will begin to change. The first phase of

the project - the multi-storey car park - is due to open at the end of next week. Work on the second stage - the demolition of the southern side of Petty Cury and the building of shops and service roads on the Lion Yard - is already under way and is expected to take about two years. The third stage - the building of a large central library - will start soon after this 72 06 27

1972 07 24

The Lion Yard multi-deck car park opens on Monday proving another 500 car spaces within a stone's throw of the centre of Cambridge. The completion marks the first stage of the city council's multi million redevelopment project for the area - which was first proposed nearly 25 years ago. The new park, which aims to cater for the shopper and the short stay motorist, is the second major car park to open in the city in less than a year. The other is at Queen Anne Terrace, which opened last October. The usual parking fees will be 5p for the first hour, 15p for two hours, 25p for three hours, up to a maximum of 75p for 10 hours. The council hope the prices will encourage people who work in the city centre to leave their cars in the parks away from the centre, like New Square and Prospect Row, where the charges are considerably less.

1972 08 08

I was among the first into the new Lion Yard multi-deck car park when it opened. The public hadn't really caught on, and the vast concrete halls echoed emptily to the dumpers and merry shouts of workmen still constructing it. Later in the week I returned. Now the park was known and very full. It was clearly making an impression on the parking situation in Cambridge for there were now more parking meters available than usual. It won't be until all the decks are in use at Lion Yard that the final effect on Cambridge parking will be seen. In my view it must be beneficial – Rodney Tibbs

1972 08 10

15,000 use Lion Yard car park, p16

1973 02 05

Cambridge's longest slogan - all 60 yards of it - spanning the Lion Yard hoarding along Petty Cury is likely to remain for some time. The slogan, which advertises the Cambridge Claimants' Union, exceeds even the anti-Vietnam banner erected on King's College chapel some years ago. The foot-high, spray-painted slogan proclaiming: "Fight for the right to live with Claimants Union, the union for all unemployed unsupported mothers, low paid supplementary pensioners, sick people" seems set to stay

1973 04 09

The Market Square ends of Guildhall Street and Peas Hill, Cambridge, were closed to traffic today as part of city council's plans eventually to make much of the central area into a pedestrian precinct. It is now possible to walk from Sidney Street to King's Parade without crossing a road. City surveyor, Mr Geoffrey Cresswell said that some motorists were still driving round Market Square attempting to get into Peas Hill. The present closure is officially regarded as only "temporary" - although it will last for possibly another two years - while rebuilding of the adjacent Lion Yard site is under way

1974 02 22

Mr Eric Cave, who has been the Cambridge city librarian, officially announced his retirement today. There have been many developments in the Cambridge library services since he was appointed in 1954. He seen three new libraries built, the introduction of mobile libraries, the opening of the record lending library, and the introduction of library services to old people's homes. He hopes to see the final completion of the fitting-out contract of the new library being built in the Lion Yard.

1974 03 29

Cambridge city council met for the last time yesterday. It took the council about ten seconds to dispose of their formal business – approving the spending of £1,248,000 on the new central library at the Lion Yard – then they went on to spend almost two hours saying goodbye to themselves, their retiring chief officers and exchanging presents. On the last day of the month, the city council, who

more or less in their present form have run Cambridge since 1836 will make way for the new Cambridge District Council.

1974 06 27

A warning that within 10 years the Lion Yard areas of Cambridge, now being completely redeveloped will become a “twilight zone” is given in a new booklet, “Walks round vanished Cambridge”, published by Land of Cokayne. It says: “Within 10 years the town centre will have moved east to the Kite area, the University west to the science city. Lion Yard will be a twilight zone lost somewhere between the two” 74 06 27

1974 09 16

St Andrew the Great church in the centre of Cambridge may be turned into a new Civic restaurant. If the scheme goes ahead it would be only a few yards from the site of the old restaurant which was demolished two years ago to make way for the Lion Yard Development project. City officials are looking into the possibility of converting the church buildings which the Diocesan authorities have classified as redundant. A feasibility study shows it could be converted into offices but would cost at least £135,000.

1975

Lion Yard statue Talos given to Minos, ruler of Crete to defend island by God Hephaestus, by Michael Ayrton [13.11]

1975

Lion from Red Lion brewery at Waterloo station - original wood carving from which brewery coadstone made that now stands on the southern end of Westminster Bridge ...

1975

Official opening brochure

1975 04 03

Leaving your car in the Lion Yard car park, Cambridge, between 5.30 pm and 6.30 pm can be costly. Mrs Carol Taylor of Trumpington drove her car into the Lion Yard at 5.46 pm and drove out again at 6.18 pm. She was charged 17p – 7p for the 14 minutes before 6 o'clock and 10p for the 18 minutes after. The charges change at 6 pm when the evening tariff comes into operation. She felt this was an unfair charge for 32 minutes of parking time.

1975 07 03

Only three of the 54 firms who have been given tenancies of the new shops in Lion Yard, Cambridge, are local, and there is considerable disquiet in some local quarters over this, said the secretary of Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. “A lot of the names are of big firms in London in the rag trade and jewellery. They can afford the high rents, but the smaller traders of Cambridge who would have expected to get the chance of a letting cannot”, he said

1975 07 18

How much are stores paying to rent a unit in the Lion Yard Development? Last October companies were being asked to stump up between £15-17,000 a year. In the Lion Yard itself the asking price was between £7-10,000 per unit. Smaller units described as boutique types were on offer between £3 & £5,000. Wealthy national companies can afford to speculate and rent properties for a few years, but for small local traders the rents have proved too expensive so far. Of 54 units rented out only two may be occupied by firms based in Cambridge – Campkins (cameras) & Waits (menswear) 75 07 18

1975 08 06

Cambridge' new £1 million plus central library being built in the Lion Yard, is due to open at the end of September – three months late. The task of transferring more than 100,000 books and reorganising

the library's various departments is likely to take up to a fortnight. But Librarian Andrew Armour is hoping to keep the closure of the main library down to three days to minimise inconvenience.

1975 09 11

Princess Anne is to put the royal seal of approval on one of Cambridge's most controversial schemes. She has agreed to open the multi-million pound Lion Yard redevelopment complex in December. More than four years have been spent in its construction. Expert critics are unhappy about the scale of the enterprise and its relationship to the previously intimate and recently pedestrianised shopping precinct in Petty Cury. There has also been adverse comment on the nature of the shopping development which, because of the high rents, has made it a virtually unattainable Shangri-La for local businesses.

1975 09 17

Over 25 years of argument, several million pounds of ratepayers' money and three years of toil what will we get? The Lion Yard development. On the first floor is a modest entrance to a building that Cambridge has desperately needed for many years ... the new library. It has three floors. The top will be used for housing the Cambridgeshire Collection. On the first floor is a children's' room where young readers can comfortably browse through their selection. The building bears about as much comparison with the old Wheeler Street library as Buckingham Palace does with the Black Hole of Calcutta

1975 09 18

A life sized mythological figure in bronze, the work of British sculptor Mr Michael Ayrton will be erected on the Lion Yard site. The semi-abstract sculpture represents Tarlos, the legendary man of bronze who was given to Mynos, ruler of Crete to defend the island. The leader of the city council, Peter Wright said: "No doubt some will like it and some will not"

1975 10 03

The Alley Boutique is now open in new and spacious premises in the Lion Yard arcade. Mr Ian Burns said: "Customers are flocking in, but we have plenty of room for expansion and we hope to introduce a mezzanine floor. We were the first boutique in Cambridge, opening in Falcon Yard ten years ago. We get customers of 12 and up to 60 years of age, but most are young". The Boutique sells almost any clothing from a jumper to a fur coat.

1975 10 16

Never had the cherubs on top of the marble columns looked down on a scene of such noise and commotion. For years they have held sway over an atmosphere of dignified hush in the library in Wheeler Street, Cambridge. But all that changed when removal men dismantled bookcases and piled thousands of books into crates ready to go to the ultra-modern library in Lion Yard. As men stripped away its contents the room with its faded splendour and peeling yellow paint looked remarkably small. It was never easy to reach the top or bottom shelves of the tall bookcases. Anyone bold enough to crouch down and survey the low shelf inevitably collided with some other borrower standing behind.

1975 12 02

The Lion Yard lion is up, carrying in his proud frame many years of history as he looks down on the centre of the Cambridge new development's shopping centre. The city's acquisition of such an appropriate symbol is a combination of luck and circumstance. The lion is believed to be the original wood carving for a cast lion which stood over the old Red Lion brewery at Waterloo station. It was discovered at the Woburn Abbey antique centre four years ago. Since then it has been completely refurbished at the city engineer's workshops at Mill Road. Now it has been put up in its final home - the Lion Yard 75 12 02

1975 12 03

Lion Yard opening supplement

1975 12 04

Princess Anne, making her first official visit to Cambridge, insisted on an impromptu chat with some of the thousands of sight-seers who thronged the city centre Lion Yard shopping centre. An estimated 10,000 people packed the Market Square and stood eight deep each side of Petty Cury as she walked into the new shopping centre. She stopped to talk to the delighted shop girls who were crowding their doorways and also to the eager shoppers who pressed forward to get a closer look at her. She explained: "I am not a complete stranger here because I have been shown around the university and city unofficially by two previous students who are both fans of the old city" 75 12 04

1975 12 04

Large crowds turned out to see Princess Anne wherever she went in Cambridge during her visit yesterday. Inevitably the criticisms that have been voiced about the architecture of the Lion Yard were referred to during the formal speeches. The city council's Labour leader, Coun Peter Wright, spoke of the 'dissension' which still existed over the complex. And Princess Anne, who declared herself a "VI – that means very independent" observer of the architectural scene, said she would report back on the project to two "former students" at Cambridge University when she returned to London 75 12 04

1975 12 12

Lion Yard cartoon, p23

1977 02 17

What kind of shopping facilities will we see in Cambridge in the future? If recent events are pointers then the small operator will be replaced – just as quaint non-conformist Petty Cury was replaced with the corporate dullness of Lion Yard. The rents jumped enormously leaving the high mark-up multitudes – Golden Egg, Dixons, Van Allen, Etam, Chelsea Girl et al to take the units paying between £3,000 and £18,000 a year in rent. It meant that the variety of shops was reduced. If the Kite complex proposals were to see the light of day then an identical effect could occur.

1977 02 22

Cambridge open-air market traders have slammed the city council's decision to close the underground lavatories on the Market Square during the day. It will be most inconvenient for the many fruit and veg sellers obliged by health regulations to keep hot water on or near their stalls. They now face a hundred yards walk to the Lion Yard super loos, described as the most palatial in the country. But women stall holders can face up to half an hour's wait during the summer tourist season.

1977 04 23

The new Bridge House office block and restored 16th-century buildings in Bridge Street, Cambridge, are a landmark and inspiration, said the Mayor, Coun Bob May, when he opened the £1.3 million redevelopment. "If only the architects had been involved at Lion Yard then things might have turned out differently there", he said. He praised the skill with which the historic and environmentally important site had been handled by the Scottish Mutual Assurance Society and its architects, Saunders Boston of Cambridge. It was an outstanding example of how a new building could be fitted into an old environment and how old buildings could be preserved.

1977 05 25

Tenpenny vanilla cornets were given away free in Lion Yard, Cambridge as two ice cream bosses lined up for battle. Mr John "Country Boy" Powell gave away more than a hundredweight of his home-made ice-cream as part of his cold war against rival seller Mr Giovanni "Lyon's Maid" Rozzo. He claims that he has a gentleman's agreement with the boss of Wally's Ice Cream to share the Lion Yard "pitch". So there were a few frosty glances when Mr O. De Gennare wheeled in Mr Rozzo's barrow and set up in competition right next door. "Its poisonous" said one schoolboy to another who was clutching no less than three chocolate cornets to his chest. "I've gone mad", Mr Powell told the inquisitive.

1977 07 23

The Mayor of Heidelberg officially opened the rooftop garden above Lion Yard, Cambridge, which has been named after the German town to mark the link between Cambridge and its twin university town. Oberburgermeister Renhold Zundel said a scheme similar to Lion Yard was being built in his city and they might have a garden named after Cambridge soon. 77 07 23

1977 08 12

The Mayor of Cambridge had a go at skateboarding, the latest craze among youngsters. But try as he would to keep still the board had a will of its own and he had to hold on to one of a group of teenagers who went to see him about finding a proper skateboard rink in the city. He told them he had already made a firm request for the Amenities Committee to consider their 1,637-name petition and asked if some of the city's lottery money can be spent on one. The slopes of the Lion Yard present an ideal combination of smooth surface and different angles to turn in but shoppers say it is dangerous and large areas of plate glass windows are likely to be broken

1977 08 19

Theoretically worth over £150,000 a year in rent, the 47,000 square foot office accommodation above the Lion Yard has stood empty since the precinct opened nearly two years ago. Agents trying to let the offices blame the economic malaise for their lack of success. The high price of central car parking is also a barrier. The city council made a former builders' site available to encourage offers and now one taker has at last been found. Vinters, the Cambridge solicitors have taken space. But Bidwells say matters will only improve when companies begin to expand and the perpetually optimistic estate agents say it is beginning to happen.

1977 09 10

The owner of the Alley Boutique warned skateboard enthusiasts to keep out of the Cambridge Lion Yard after his shop's plate glass window was smashed. Police found a skateboard amid the broken glass. Ian Burns said: "This is the third shop window to be damaged since they started using the slopes of the walkways". The skateboarders who are aged from 10 to 25 use the shopping precinct as an evening time practice run. The Mayor said: "Until they can find their own rink they say the Lion Yard is the only place to go"

1978 06 05

Most of the offices built on top of the City Council's Lion Yard complex in the centre of Cambridge are still unoccupied – nearly three years after completion of the development. Now councillors are concerned about the loss of rents and want more intensive steps taken to find tenants for the block, which is gathering dust. Only 5,750 feet has been let, to a subsidiary of Barclay's Bank but negotiations are now taking place with two organisations. If these fall through some councillors think they should let charity organisations use them

1978 08 08

The ice-cream war is hotting up in Cambridge's Lion Yard and the competition is getting so cut-throat that even some of the salesmen feel there are too many stands – as many as 19 on one day. A few years ago there were only two or three stalls selling hot-dogs and ice creams, or roast chestnuts in the winter. But now the proliferation is bringing complaints from shops who say their trade is suffering and from tourists, who say they are being molested. In addition the mouldering strife is threatening to erupt in violence as the growing number of traders cut into each other's sales.

1978 10 04

Some of the long-disused offices above Cambridge's Lion Yard shopping complex may soon be turned into restaurants. The plans have been warmly greeted by councillors who have complained for a long time about the empty space standing in one of the city's key commercial positions. The applicants want to rent the bulk of the ground floor and turn it into two restaurants, one catering for general medium price trade and the other as a high-class 'night life' restaurant. The three-storey office

block which contains thousands of square feet of space has been standing empty since the development was completed three years ago. 78 10 04

1979 02 06

Expansion plans for Robert Sayle's shopping complex in the centre of Cambridge were supported by the City Council's controlling Conservatives who say the extensions will improve shopping facilities and bring much needed car parking space into the city centre. But Labour says the extra cars would cause traffic problems and in any case the centre of Cambridge should not be put up for sale. Sayle's want to extend their shop floor space facing Lion Yard and provide more than 100 public and private parking spaces. It would benefit city traders and motorists alike

1979 09 11

Ronelles, a disco restaurant, will soon open above Lion Yard in the heart of Cambridge and one of the city's most interesting business gambles will be under way. It's a big bet. The lease is long but the odds are short that young Cambridge people will patronise a place which they have long insisted is overdue. The club will have a membership of 500 and be relatively expensive with a £100 a year membership fee. It will have an elevated restaurant, two bars, a dance floor, a waterfall and cabins. These together with palm trees and a native mask on the logo suggest the premises may have a Caribbean flavour. It will be a welcome solution to an embarrassing problem for the space, originally intended for offices, has stayed empty for years.

1980

1980 01 30

The new magistrates' courts, perched above the Lion Yard car park have been built to last for the next 100 years at a cost of £1.7 million. Some wonder how Cambridge managed to acquire such an expensive addition to the skyline in these times of stringent public spending cuts, the answer seems to be that it won its case just in time. Today the verdict would be different. After years of less-than-satisfactory courtroom conditions we have something of a showpiece. Compared to the old courts the new carpeted building is luxury itself. "From boarding house to Hilton" was how one prison officer described it. In fact the only criticism is that some people will consider the edifice 'too good'

80 01 30

1980 02 20

The owner of Ronelles disco restaurant in Lion Yard Cambridge is delighted with the response to the Caribbean / Polynesian theme used in the décor. He felt there was no point in providing first-class surroundings, a sophisticate atmosphere and good meals if they were to allow customers to come there in jeans and sweaters. So he warned that "scruffs" would be turned away. Would-be members are also vetted before being accepted. Admission varies from £2 to £3 and main courses in the restaurant vary from chargrilled chicken at £2.40 to duck a l'orange at under £5. Bar prices are only a few pence above the average 80 02 20a

1980 03 28

Cambridge's new £1½ million magistrates' courts above the Lion Yard multi-storey car park were officially opened by Prince Philip. Although he claimed to have stopped being surprised at anything he was obviously amused that they had been built on top of a car park, but said that it was often the most eccentric ideas which were the best. He hoped they would be required as little as possible 80 03 28a

1980 06 26

Rents increase 350-550%, from £9,000 to £40,000 [13.13]

1983 04 26

The County Council has been urging Cambridge councillors to provide more city centre parking space. They say 1,000 extra parking spaces are needed. Now they have suggested six sites: a 250-

space extension to the present Lion Yard multi-deck, land behind Telephone House in Regent Street-Park Terrace (220 spaces on a four-deck park), the old Addenbrooke's Hospital site (250 spaces), land behind Shire Hall (450 spaces on a three-deck park), Saxon Street (480) and Adam and Eve Street (460 spaces). 83 04 26 p5

1983 11 15

Cambridge could soon have a new underground car park, an extensive range of new shops and a luxury hotel at the edge of the Lion Yard car park. The land, which is let as a private car park, was originally scheduled for a large hotel, then the John Lewis organisation became interested. But now the City Council is considering extending the Lion Yard car park, probably underground, and selling the land for shopping. It might fetch as much as £5 million. 83 11 15 p1

1984 04 06

The problem of alcoholics monopolising and sometimes abusing public facilities in Lion Yard has been puzzling councillors for a year. It is warm and dry in winter and in the summer they move elsewhere. They need somewhere to congregate out of public gaze. Some say the Guildhall would be suitable or a centre established in one of the five local churches. Another solution could be to rent a shop and provide drop-in facilities. But this would be costly. 84 04 06

1985 01 21

An old playschool bus has been fitted out with bench seats and facilities to make hot drinks and sandwiches with an informal meeting area upstairs. It will stand on waste land next to the Lion Yard car park as a drop-in centre to provide a warm, sheltered meeting place for the homeless, unemployed and disadvantaged people of Cambridge. There will be two basic rules – no drink and no violence. It is run by the Cyrenians who will offer advice on problems with the DHSS, housing and drinking. But there has been a lot of public hostility 85 01 21

1985 07 06

Lion Yard car park extension plan – 85 07 06

1985 09 01

Ian Purdy has probably done more than anybody else in modern times to shape the Cambridge we know today. He is the man who fought and won the battle to lift the years-long planning ban on Cambridge expansion, thus opening the doors to industrial development. He played the major part in approving the controversial Lion Yard redevelopment which changed the face of the city centre forever. But he did not design it – that was done by private architects - and doubts if such a scheme would have been approved even 18 months after it was given the go-ahead. "People had so much concrete redevelopment thrust on them after the war and called a halt to it", he says. 85 09 01b & c

1986 01 06

Dearer car parking charges in Cambridge will drive motorists to shop in other towns, says a Director of Joshua Taylor. At Peterborough the charge for four hours is 60p compared to £1.50 in Lion Yard. The Grafton Eastern park costs just 50p for three hours which is unfair to city centre traders. But Lion Yard prices are likely to increase to 30p for the first hour following the end of a 'freeze' on charges which has been operating for the past 16 months to try and attract more shoppers 86 01 06

1986 01 25

Cambridge City Council wants to increase central area parking as cheaply as possible and is prepared to do a deal with a developer to sell or lease the large area of waste land next the Lion Yard car park. Possibilities include an eight screen cinema complex to be developed by an American company, offices, houses and flats, a luxury hotel or shops linked to St Andrew's Street by moving walkways. Some of the schemes are very attractive visually but the ones that could give the council the best returns are amongst the ugliest. 86 01 25

1986 03 11

Holiday Inn plans for hotel and extensions Lion Yard car park welcomed – 86 03 11

1986 04 24

Michael Copley and Dag Ingram were undergraduates at Churchill College in the '70s. One had a recorder and the other borrowed £5 to buy an accordion and they started playing on Saturday morning in Lion Yard. One day they received a knock on the door from a policeman. He wanted to book them for a policeman's ball at Huntingdon. The Cambridge Buskers were on their way to stardom. They toured Germany and did a recording with Deutsche Grammophon which made them pop stars. Now they have been invited back to Cambridge to play at the University Music Club 86 04 24c # c.69

1986 07 09

W.H. Smith, a familiar sight on Cambridge Market Hill for the past 25 years is to close. Staff will be transferred to their other shops in Lion Yard and at Cambridge railway station. 86 07 09

1987 08 19

Ambitious plans for a £3million facelift for the Lion Yard shopping centre have been unveiled by Barclays Bank. The precinct – officially opened by Princess Anne in 1975 – will be brought bang up-to-date with new lighting, new paving and a new shop unit neat St Andrew's the Great. The biggest change will be a covered first-floor level incorporating the Heidelberg Gardens with four food kiosks and a seating area for 200. It will be a much better place and people will be able to get something to eat and drink there, developers claim. 87 08 19

1988 03 08

Multi-million pound plans to refurbish the Lion Yard shopping centre would include gates to shut off the precinct at night. There would be a food court with restaurant on the upper floor of the present WH Smith which would be relocated in Heidelberg Gardens. 88 03 08

1988 05 05

Lion Yard redevelopment history – 88 05 05b

1989 06 14

Cinderellas Rockerfellas –formerly Ronelles - Cambridge's top night spot, reopens with a new look. Top disc jockey Bruno Brookes will make an appearance along with Hot Flesh and their fire dance spectacular, Marc Oberon the illusionist and robots Adam and Eve. The evening begins with a jazz band playing outside the club in the Heidelberg Gardens in Lion Yard. The club now sports a more upmarket image and incorporates Waldo T. Pepper's restaurant 89 06 14

1989 08 11

St Andrew the Great church at the entrance to Lion Yard went into rapid decline as the congregation dwindled and was declared redundant in 1983. The diocese put in planning applications for community use then leased it to Grosvenor Square Properties, a London-based development company. Since then proposals have been met with a storm of protest. Many want church, which houses a memorial to Captain Cook, to an education and heritage centre 89 08 11a

1990 08 10

Lion Yard car park underground extension opened – 90 08 10a; brings relief 90 08 17a

